

Remarriage in the United States

Poster presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Montreal, August 10-14, 2006

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Overview

This poster looks at remarriage in the United States over the last half of the 20th century. It considers questions such as:

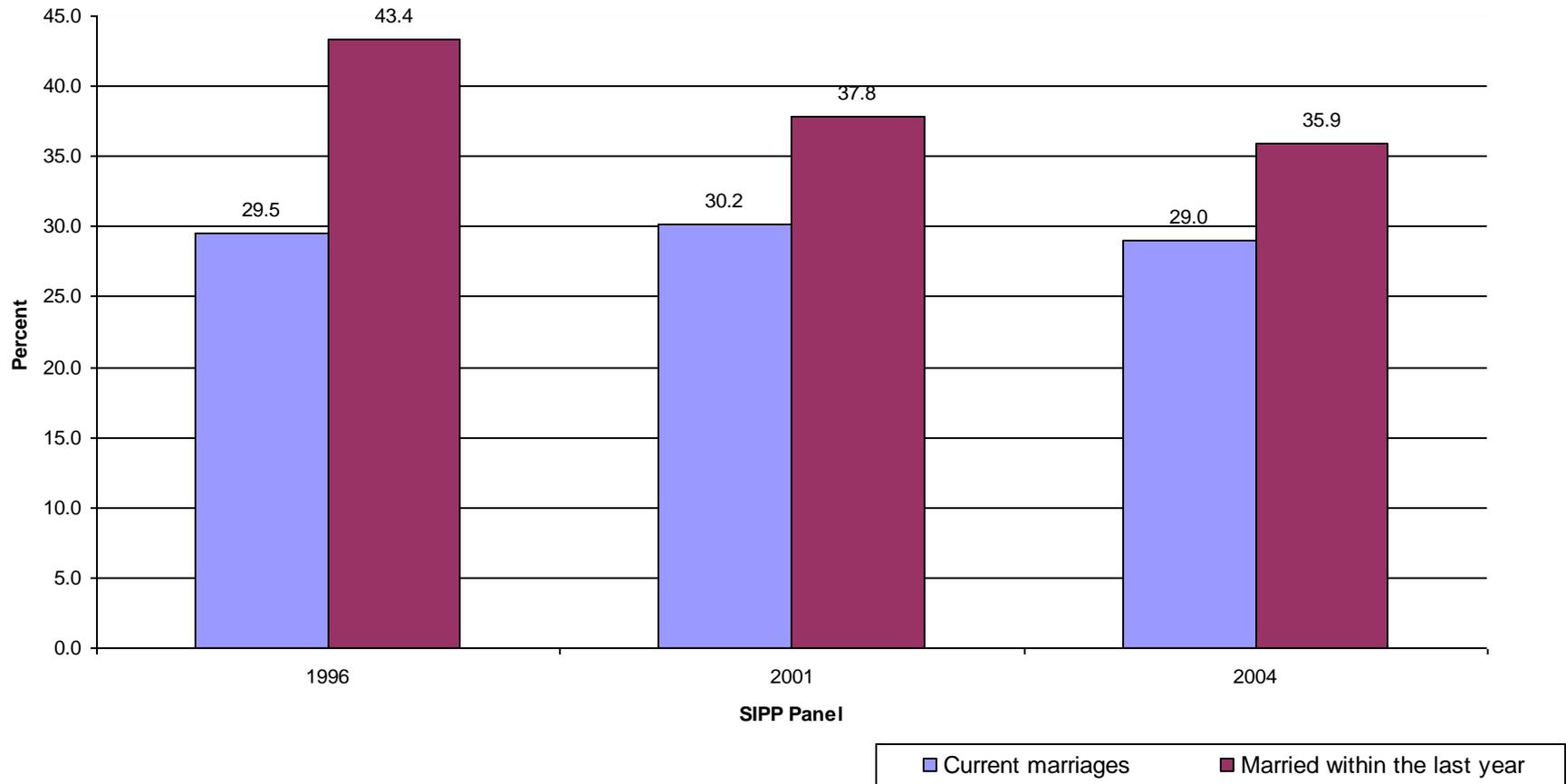
- What proportion of recent marriages are remarriages?
- What percent remarry within 5 years after divorce?
- Who is more likely to remarry?
- How long do people wait until they remarry?
- What is the composition of the remarried households that are formed?

Data

- This poster uses pooled data from 3 panels of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (1996, 2001, 2004).
- A marital history was collected in the second interview (Wave 2) of each panel.
- Data from the three sets are combined to increase sample size to a total of 33,891 (unweighted) people 15 years and over who have been married two or more times.

What proportion of recent marriages involve people who are remarrying?

Percent of All Current Marriages and Couples Married Within the Last Year Where at Least One Spouse is Remarried: 1996, 2001, 2004



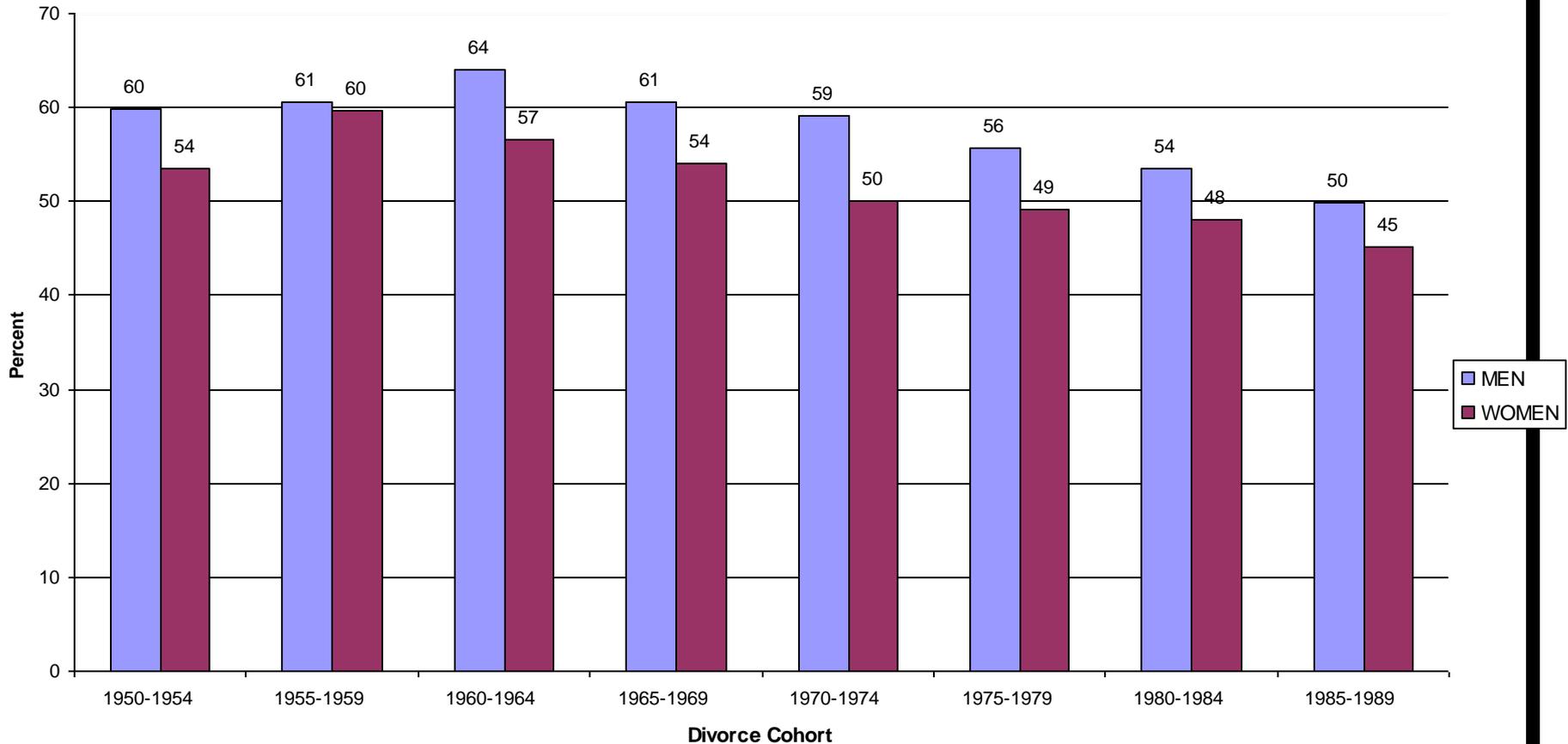
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996, 2001, and 2004 panels, Wave 2.

What proportion of recent marriages involve people who are remarrying?

- In 1996, 43 percent of marriages in the year prior to the survey involved at least one spouse who was remarrying.
- Percentages for the 2001 and 2004 panels are 38 percent and 36 percent, respectively.
- Of men and women who married for the second or third time in the year prior to the interview, 91 percent were remarrying after being divorced, and 9 percent were remarrying after being widowed.
- Data from the National Center for Health Statistics, show that in 1990, 46 percent of the couples who married involved at least one spouse who was remarrying, up from 31 percent in 1970.
- Higher percentages of marriages involving people who were remarrying during the 1990s correspond with the rise in divorce rates which occurred during the 1980s.

What percent remarry within 5 years after divorce?

Percentage of Men and Women Who Remarried Within 5 Years After Divorcing From First Marriage, by Divorce Cohort



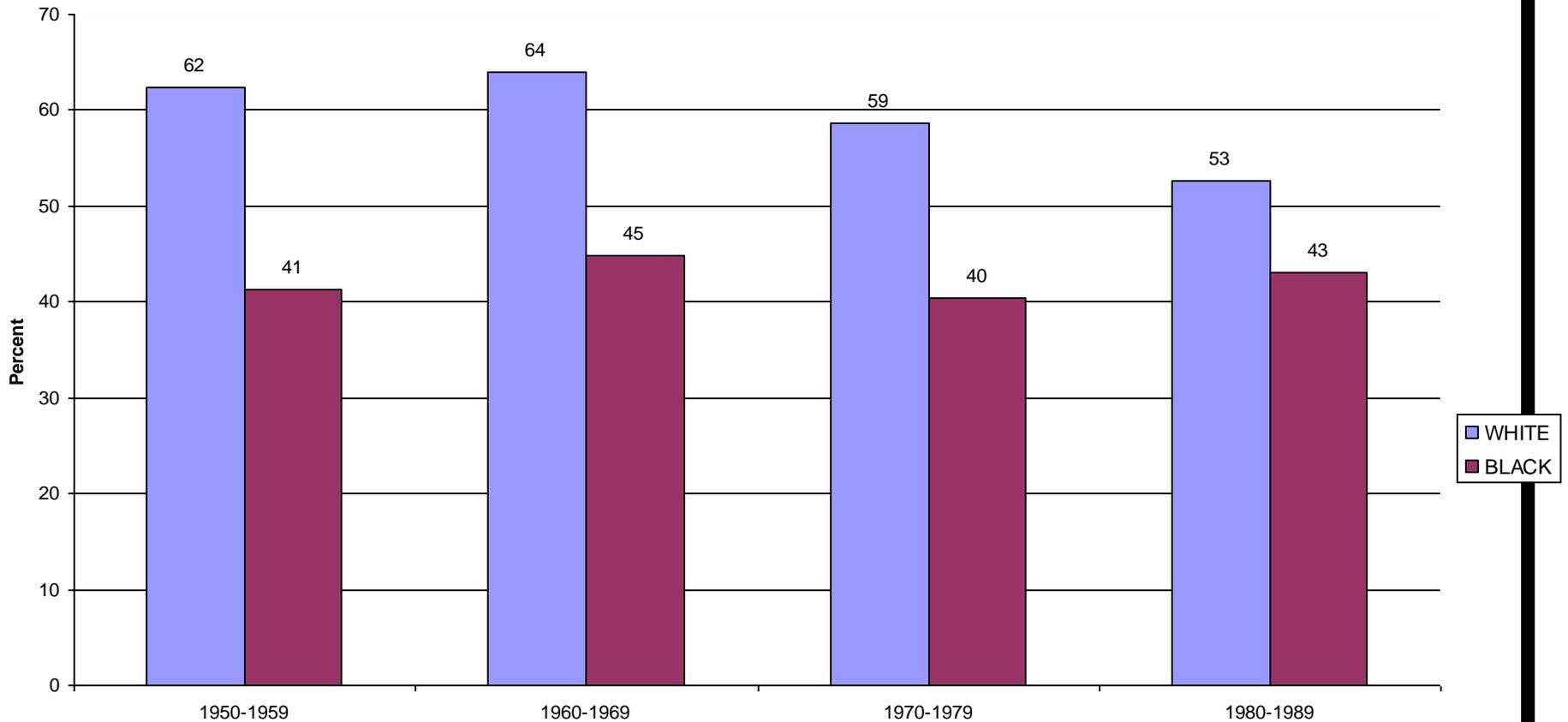
Source: US Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996, 2001, and 2004 panels, Wave 2.

What percent remarry within 5 years after divorce?

- Most men and women marry within 5 years of divorce.
- Generally, a higher percentage of men remarry within 5 years than women.
- The percentage who remarry within 5 years after divorce declined since 1950.
- Since the data shown reflect only the percentage remarried after 5 years, the proportion who may eventually remarry is unknown.

Who is more likely to remarry: Men

Percentage Who Remarried Within 5 Years After Divorcing From First Marriage, by Divorce Cohort, for Men, by Race



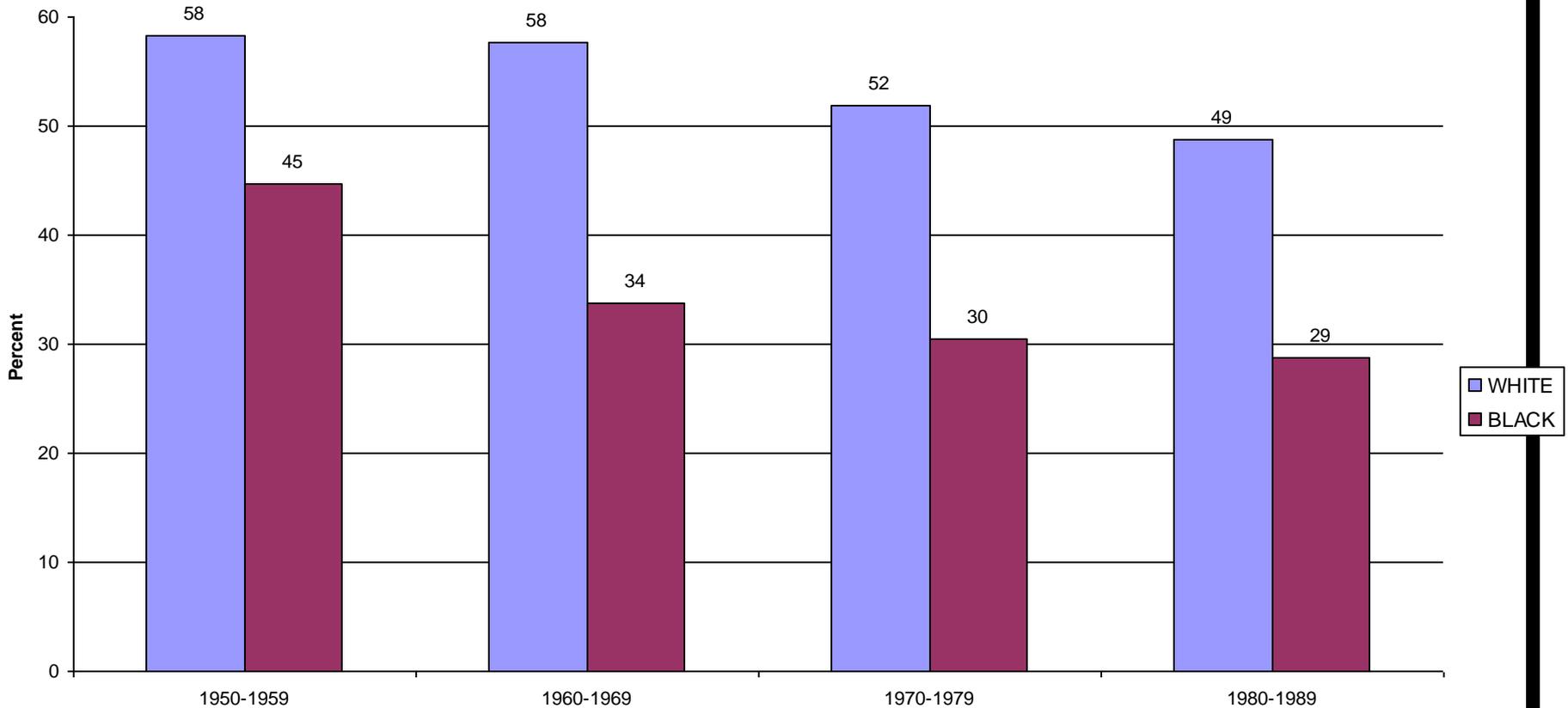
Divorce Cohort

Source: US Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996, 2001, and 2004 panels, Wave 2.

NOTE: In the 2004 panel, the collection of race allowed for multiracial responses. People included here as "White" or "Black" reported only White or only Black.

Who is more likely to remarry: Women

Percentage Who Remarried Within 5 Years After Divorcing From First Marriage, by Divorce Cohort, for Women, by Race



Source: US Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996, 2001, and 2004 panels, Wave 2.

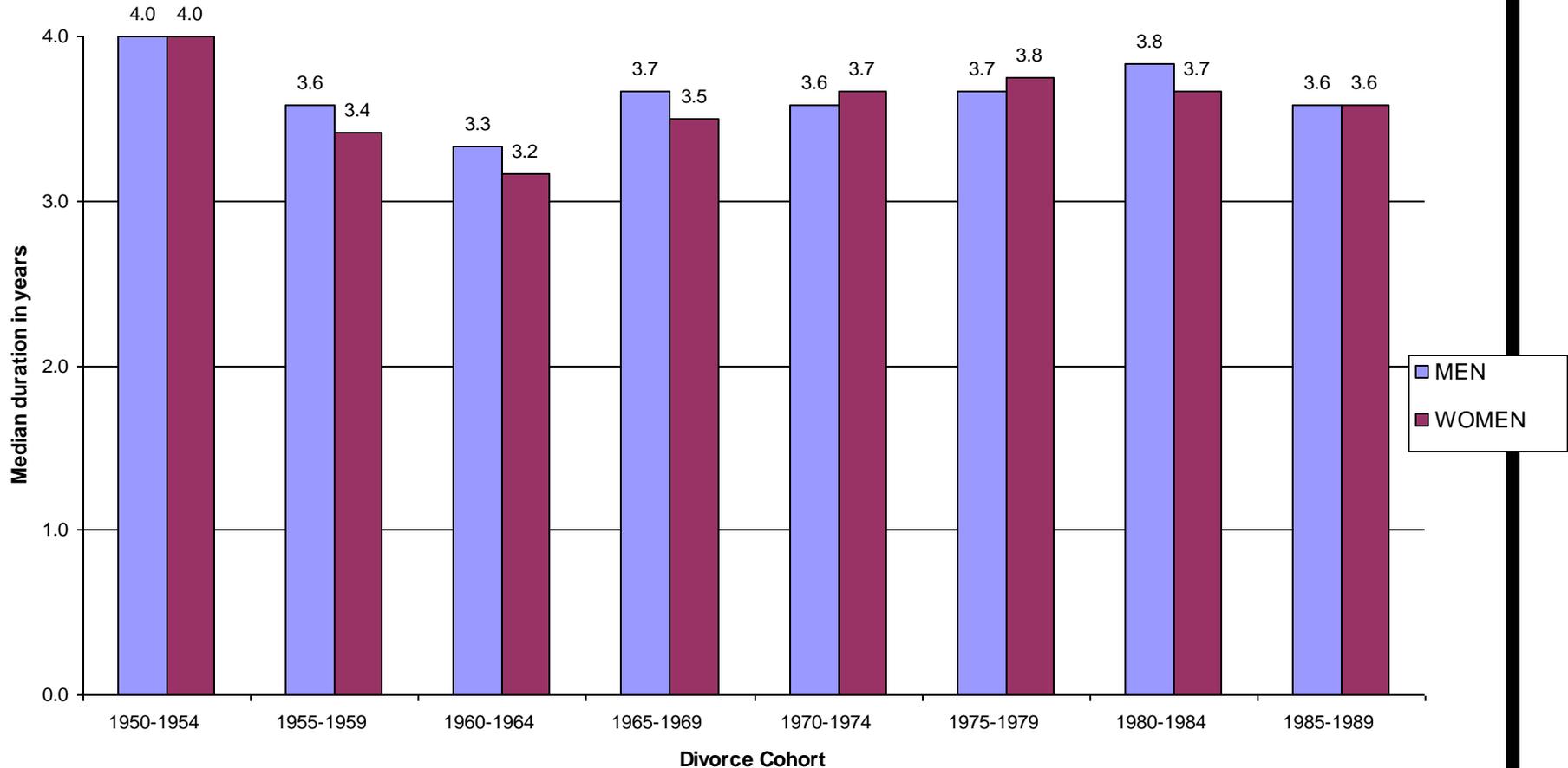
NOTE: In the 2004 panel, the collection of race allowed for multiracial responses. People included here as "White" or "Black" reported only White, or only Black.

Who is more likely to remarry?

- In addition to the general pattern of men remarrying more than women, a higher proportion of Whites remarry than Blacks.
- This pattern is evident for both men and women.
- A lower percentage of Black men remarried within 5 years than White men. The gap ranges from roughly 10 percentage points to 20 percentage points.
- The gap between the percentages of White and Black women, was more consistent, at roughly 20 percentage points, except for those who divorced in 1950-1959, for whom it was 13 percentage points.

After divorce, how long until people remarry?

Median Duration to Remarriage After Divorcing From First Marriage, by Divorce Cohort, for Men and Women



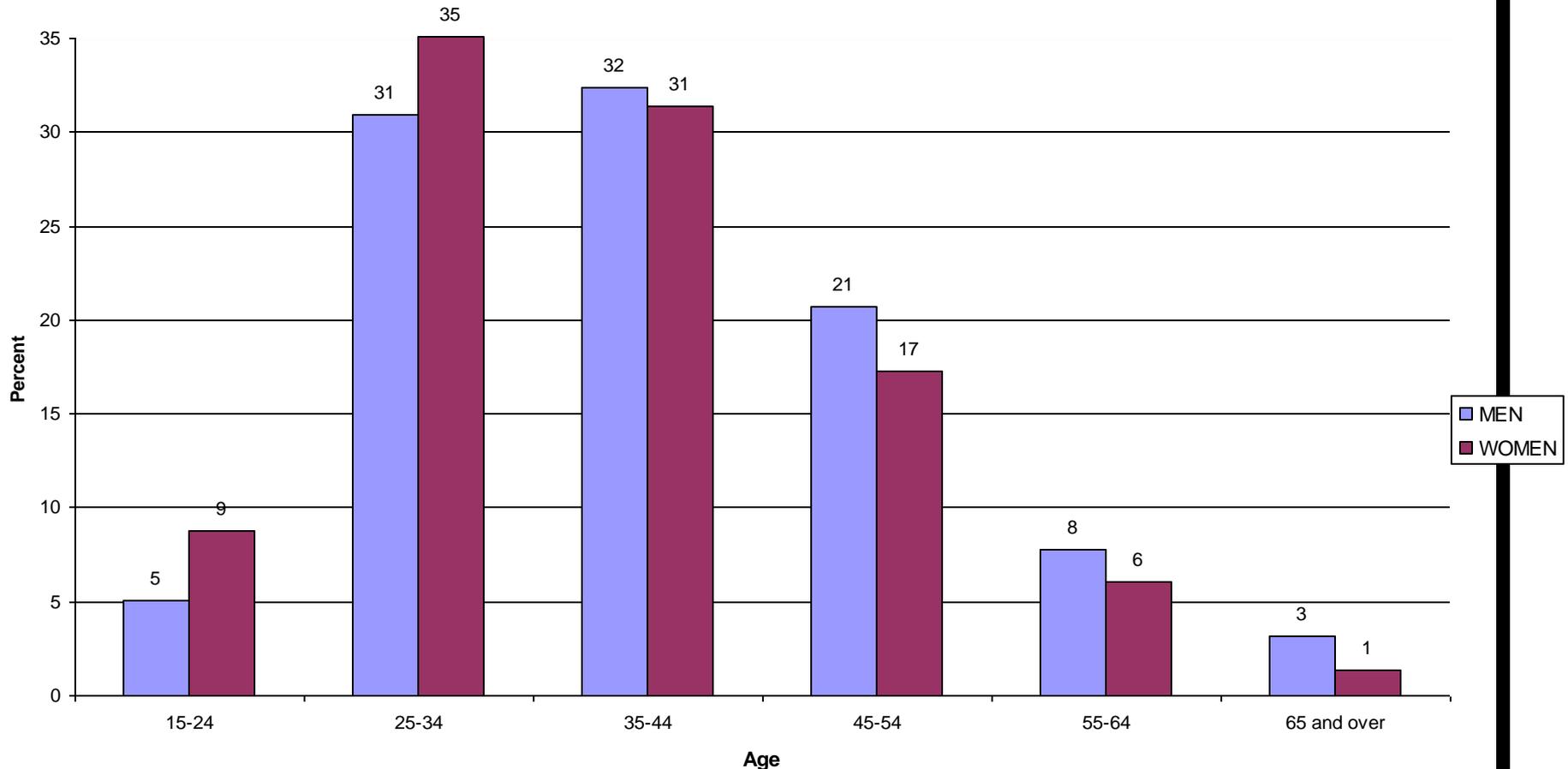
Source: US Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996, 2001, and 2004 panels, Wave 2.

After divorce, how long until people remarry?

- The median length of time to remarry after the divorce from a first marriage (for those who have remarried by the time of the survey) has been consistent over time.
- For men and women who divorced in 1950-1954, the median duration to remarriage was 4 years.
 - Since then it has remained between 3 and 4 years.
- The median length of time to remarriage after being widowed from a first marriage, was 3.0 years for men and 4.4 years for women.

What is the age composition of spouses in recently remarried couples?

Percent Distribution of Age for Recently Remarried Couples, by Sex



Source: US Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996, 2001, and 2004 panels, Wave 2. Sample of couples in which at least one spouse remarried within year prior to the interview.

What is the age composition of spouses in recently remarried couples?

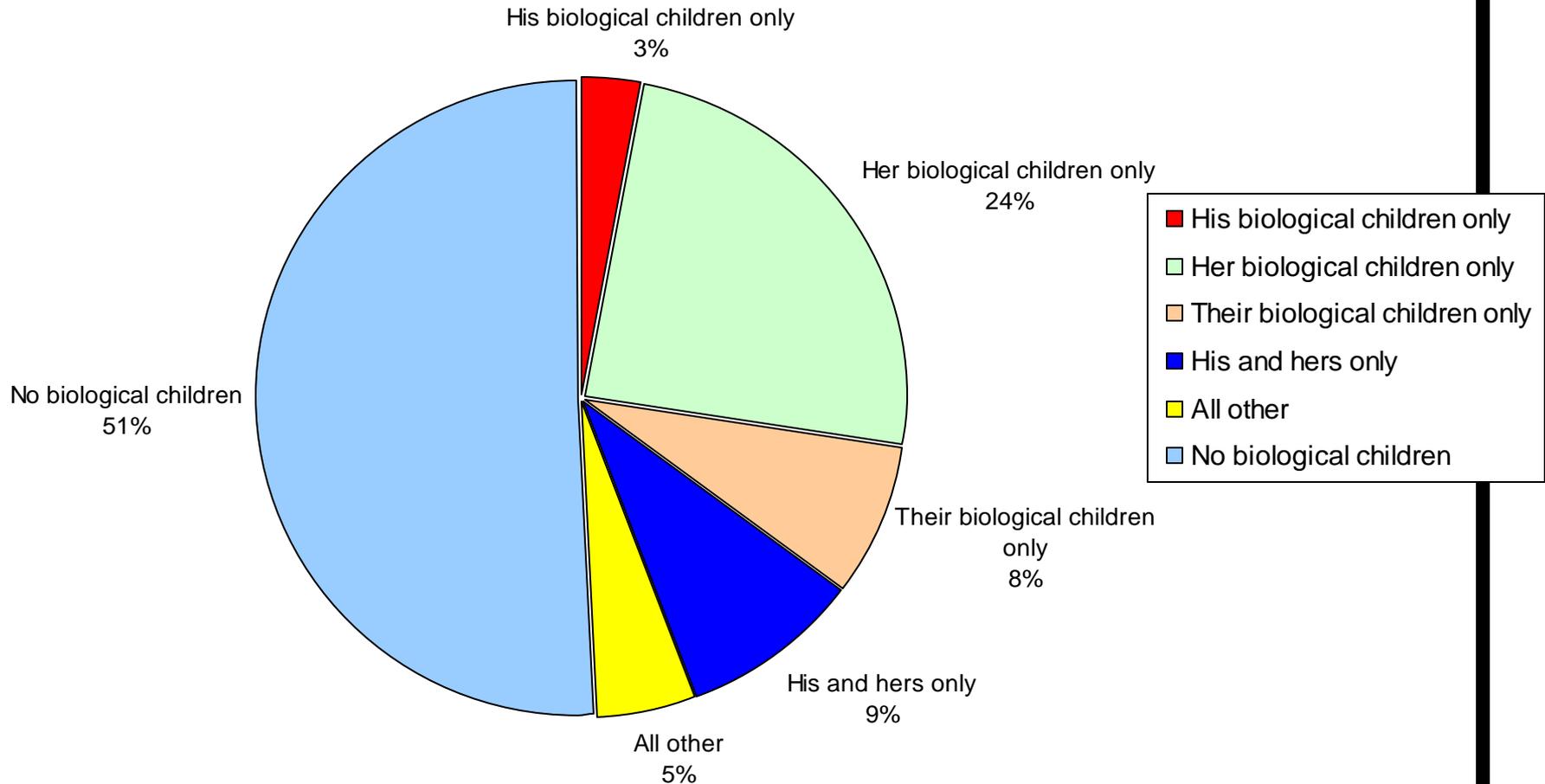
- Approximately 60 percent of the men and women in recent remarriages are 25-44 years old:
- One third of the men and one quarter of the woman involved were age 45 and over.
- The percentage of women among recently remarried couples who were age 15-24 was 9 percent compared with 5 percent for men.
- This probably reflects the greater likelihood that women are younger than their spouse.

What are the characteristics of the households that are formed by remarriage?

- The next charts focus on people who remarried (at least one spouse was divorced from their previous marriage) within the year prior to the survey date.
- Pooling the data from the 1996, 2001, and 2004 SIPP panels yields 856 couples (unweighted).
- 36 percent of the couples are from the 1996 panel, 26 percent from 2001, and 38 percent from 2004.
- The proportion from each panel is not equal due to sample variations among panels.

What are the characteristics of the households that are formed by remarriage? Children: His, Hers, Theirs, None

Presence of Biological Children Under 18 for Recently Remarried Couples



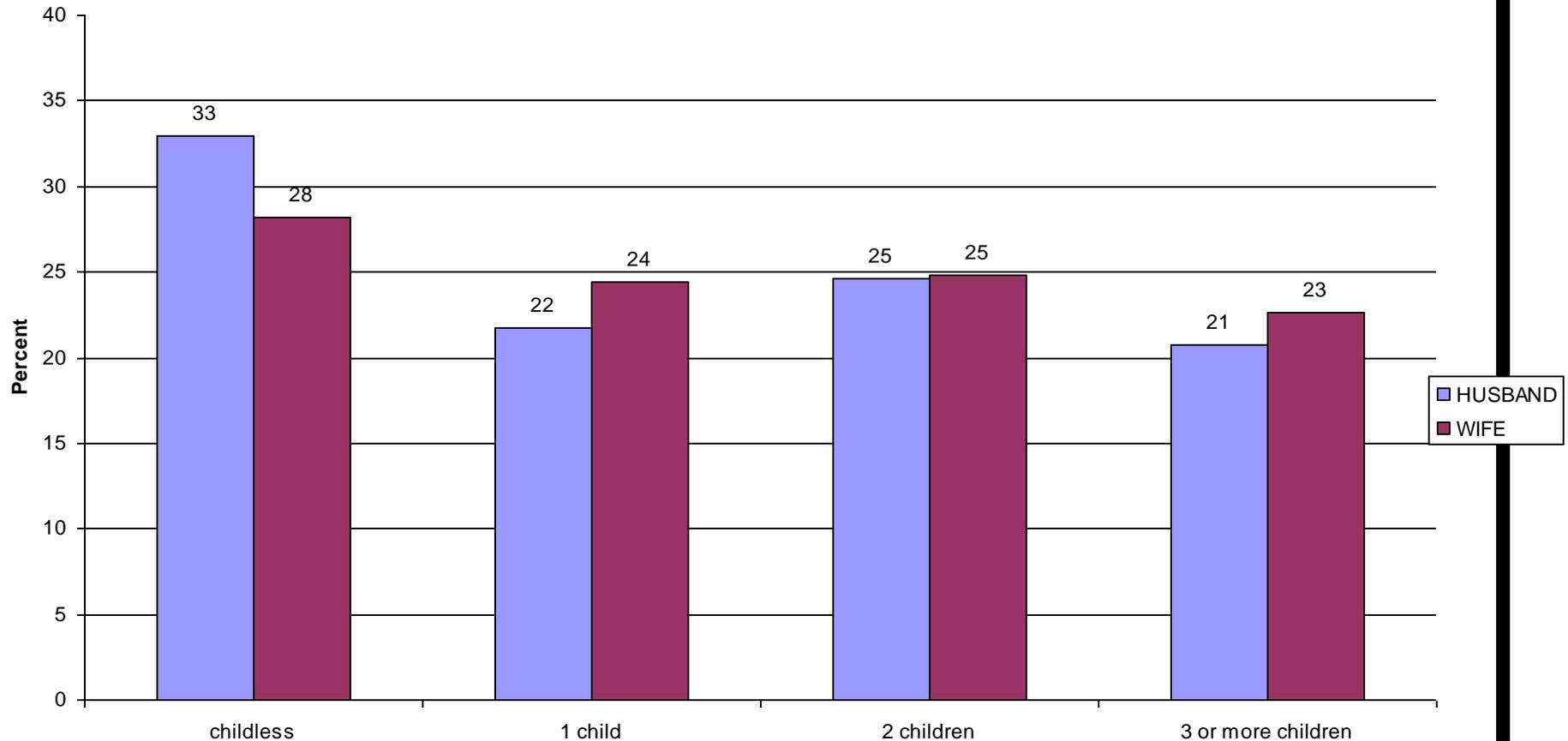
Source: US Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996, 2001, and 2004 panels, Wave 2. Sample of couples in which at least one spouse remarried following divorce, within the year prior to the interview.

What are the characteristics of the households that are formed by remarriage? Children: His, Hers, Theirs, None

- Half of the households formed by remarriage following divorce do not have any biological children under 18 present.
- Households which do contain children are most likely to have only the wife's children present (24 percent).
- Roughly equal proportions (8-9 percent) of the households have both the husband's and the wife's children only (no joint children), or only joint children.
- This figure reflects only co-resident biological children under 18—the spouses may have children over 18, or other children who do not live with them, as well as non-biological children.

What are the characteristics of the households that are formed by remarriage? Children even born

Children Ever Born for Spouses Among Recently Remarried Couples



Source: US Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996, 2001, and 2004 panels, Wave 2. Sample of couples in which at least one spouse remarried after divorce within year prior to the interview.

What is the composition of the households that are formed by remarriage? Children ever born

- Most spouses in remarried couples already have children.
 - Thirty-two percent of the men, and 27 percent of the women were childless—that is, they had no biological children.
- Half of the women (50 percent), and roughly half of the men (47 percent) had 1 or 2 children ever born to them.
- About one fifth (21 percent) of the men and one quarter (24 percent) of the women had 3 or more children.

Remarriage in the United States: Summary

- Most people remarry following a divorce from first marriage.
 - This differs by race, with fewer Blacks remarrying than Whites.
- The median duration to remarriage following divorce from a first marriage is about 3-4 years, and has remained relatively stable.
- The majority of couples who remarried following a divorce had at least one of the spouses aged 25-44.
- Half of the households formed included children under 18.
- Most of those who were recently remarried had biological children, although not all were living in the household.

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